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Oregon Governor's Fund for the Environment Awards More Than \$564,000 in Grants

Salem – On Thursday, May 6, in Salem, Oregon, Governor Ted Kulongoski will award \$564,000 in fourteen grants to aid farmers, vintners, students, local governments and landowners in being stewards of our natural resources. The grants are funded by the Governor's Fund for the Environment, which is supported by pollution penalties. Since its inception in 2005, polluters have been ordered to pay more than \$4.5 million to the fund.

The news media are invited to attend the ceremony at 10:00 AM in the Governor's Ceremonial Room at the Oregon State Capitol, 900 Court Street NE, Salem, Oregon.

"Since 2005, these funds have allowed projects that restore habitats, improve water quality, and enhance wildlife and watershed functions to move forward delivering a benefit of a cleaner environment for all Oregonians," said Governor Kulongoski. "This year we are able to broaden the grants beyond the Willamette Basin, truly helping communities across the state improve their communities so that future generations of Oregonians can experience the Oregon we are proud to call home."

Governor Kulongoski and the United States Attorney's Office created the fund with the goal of establishing a sustainable revenue source that is dedicated to local environmental clean up and restoration efforts focused on preserving and protecting Oregon's rivers, watersheds and fish and wildlife. Established in April 2005 with a court-ordered settlement in a criminal pollution case, the Governor's Fund for the Environment is administered by the National Fish and Wildlife Foundation and the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service. The grant amounts vary each year based on the interest earned on the principal and new funds deposited through criminal fines and additional private and public donations.

As a new element for 2010, the Governor's Fund committee voted to expand the grant program's eligible project area to include the ecologically significant John Day River Basin and Oregon Coast regions in addition to the Willamette Basin, which had previously been the program's focus.

"Criminal polluters must be held accountable – and must pay for the harm that they cause," stated U.S. Attorney Dwight C. Holton. "Through our partnership with the Governor's Fund, polluters who are convicted of criminal activity will pay to protect Oregon's rivers, streams and habitat."

This year's fourteen successful grant recipients proposed projects that will identify and reduce pollution as well as restore and conserve fish, wildlife and plant resources and help enhance the quality of Oregon streams and habitats in the Willamette Basin, John Day Basin, and Oregon Coast. The grants range from \$15,000 to \$50,000, and total \$564,690, with an additional \$2,986,379 from matching funds and in-kind contributions.

"These grants will restore streambeds throughout Oregon, improve water quality for people and wildlife, and provide a better home for several threatened and endangered species of fish, plants and wildlife," said Foundation Executive Director Jeff Trandahl. "By gaining landowner cooperation in improving fish and wildlife habitat, we're creating win-win solutions that will have lasting benefits for people and the natural resources we cherish."

Governor Kulongoski and U.S. Attorney Karin Immergut created the Governor's Fund for the Environment in 2005. In the past five years, criminals prosecuted by the U.S. Attorney's Office in Oregon have paid over \$7 million to fund local environmental projects as part of their criminal convictions -- including over \$4.5 million to the Governor's Fund. With this year's grants, the Governor's Fund for the Environment has awarded in total over \$1.78 million to 45 projects that have leveraged an additional \$3.8 million in matching contributions.

"Oregon's natural resources and citizens will benefit from this leadership shared by Governor Kulongoski and U.S. Attorney Holton," said Robyn Thorson, Regional Director of the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service's Pacific Region. "This year's grants truly reflect the partnership aspect of the Fund. Only by working together will we improve the health of our natural landscapes and the species that live in them."

The 2010 recipients of the Oregon Governor's Fund for the Environment grants are:

Willamette Riverkeeper: Grant \$49,970; Match \$999,999

Project: Willamette Mission Programmatic Reconnection Project

Location: Willamette Mission State Park, Gervais, Marion County

Willamette Riverkeeper will restore complexity, natural riverine functions, hydraulic conditions, and geomorphologic processes to the Willamette River basin by reconnecting side channels and floodplains at Willamette Mission State Park to the mainstem Willamette River between River Miles 72 and 74. The project includes removal of two fish passage barriers (an earthen dike at the inlet and an armored bridge at the outlet) and replacement of a third barrier with a clear span bridge over the remnant channel. A preferential flow path will be cleared between the inlet and the new bridge, allowing natural processes to restore the remnant channel. By reconnecting side-channels and floodplains to the system, off-channel salmonid refugia and rearing habitat will be provided and natural processes will resume. Integrated Weed Management will replace invasive weeds with native riparian and wetland plants, improving habitat for native and migratory fauna, and reducing erosion. The site's enormous potential and its proximity to Portland and Salem make it an ideal model for channel and floodplain reconnection, riparian habitat restoration, public education, and partnerships between federal and state agencies, private foundations, and non-profit organizations.

Long Tom Watershed Council: Grant \$49,865; Match \$41,000

Project: Bear and Ferguson Creek Fish Passage Project Development

Location: Long Tom Watershed, northwest of Eugene

Long Tom Watershed Council will conduct targeted outreach and complete fish passage enhancement designs for priority sites in Bear and Ferguson Creeks. The ultimate goal of this project is to enhance fish passage for fluvial-migrating and resident cutthroat trout in the Bear and Ferguson Creek Sub-watersheds. This goal will be achieved by performing targeted outreach to landowners with high priority migration barriers on their property. Landowners will be sent outreach packets containing maps of their property and other information about the stream crossing on their property. Twenty high priority landowners will be invited to a tour of an existing Watershed Council fish passage enhancement project. Council staff will then

perform 10 site visits at high priority barriers to determine project potential and build relationships with landowners. Once the outreach efforts are complete, an engineering firm will be hired to perform site surveys and design new stream crossings that allow fish passage at the four highest priority sites. Council staff will also design three riparian or in-stream habitat enhancement projects. The desired outcome of this project is to have seven project designs finished, which will then be used as matching contributions to seek implementation funding.

McKenzie Watershed Alliance: Grant \$28,860; Match \$326,300

Project: Middle McKenzie Side Channel Enhancement Project

Location: Lane County

McKenzie Watershed Alliance will enhance spawning and rearing habitat for spring Chinook salmon and rearing habitat for bull trout, foster educational and stewardship opportunities for local youth, and develop complementary restoration projects in collaboration with private landowners. The project involves multiple partners including U.S. Forest Service (McKenzie River Ranger District), McKenzie High School (MHS) and McKenzie Watershed Council (MWC). Nine McKenzie River side channels on Forest Service lands will receive additions of large wood over a two-year period starting in 2010. Pre- and post-project monitoring will occur at all side channels in an effort to document project effectiveness over time. MHS students will assist with multiple project activities including monitoring activities (aquatic habitat inventories, macroinvertebrate, spawning and snorkel surveys), project design and public outreach. Public outreach will develop complementary restoration projects in collaboration with private landowners through a series of outreach efforts using the side channel enhancement work as a primary tool. Outreach efforts will include public tours, an interpretive sign, newspaper articles, and presentations at MWC public meetings.

Salmon-Safe, Inc.: Grant \$49,720; Match \$56,000

Project: Salmon-Safe Willamette 2010

Location: Agricultural lands in Yamhill, Washington, Marion, Clackamas, and Lane Counties

Salmon-Safe will build on its innovative efforts that have transitioned over 180 Willamette Valley vineyards, representing half of the valley's wine grape acreage, to farming practices that protect water quality and native biodiversity. Salmon-Safe will expand their market-based conservation success by applying this collaborative model in an innovative partnership with the Oregon Association of Nurseries and Food Alliance to develop a sustainability self-assessment tool and certification program to help shift Oregon's highest value agricultural sector to growing practices that protect the Willamette River and its tributaries. Since 1996, Salmon-Safe has focused on inspiring landowners to protect water quality and habitat while building marketplace presence for ecologically sustainable Oregon farm products, most notably wine from the Willamette Valley. These efforts have focused on outreach, technical assistance and site assessment. Salmon-Safe Willamette 2010 will follow this proven model of innovative public education combined with rigorous site assessment to accelerate the transformation of the nursery industry to more ecologically sustainable growing practices.

Eugene Water and Electric Board: Grant \$45,500; Match \$98,350

Project: McKenzie Watershed (OR) Healthy Farms Clean Water Program

Location: Agricultural lands in the McKenzie Watershed (Lane and Linn Counties)

Eugene Water and Electric Board will conduct workshops with McKenzie Watershed growers to access opportunities in energy, certification, conservation, local food, and chemical disposal to protect water quality and increase revenue. The McKenzie Watershed Health Farms Clean Water Program seeks to encourage sustainable agricultural practices in the watershed and ultimately strengthen food supplies to local communities while protecting regional drinking water resources. This project will focus on engaging growers and providing incentives to 1) reduce chemical storage on farms; 2) reduce chemical use by transitioning to certified organic crops; 3) provide access to local markets that tend to pay more for crops; and 4) encourage growers to participate in programs designed to increase energy efficiency, incorporate

renewable energy, reduce water consumption and protect and/or restore riparian habitat. In addition to protecting critical water resources, these actions will help to increase the economic viability of farming, which will in turn protect farmland from development pressures. Overall, this project will help to build the infrastructure that provides farmers with greater access to local food markets and protect water quality by reducing chemical use and removing old chemicals from the watershed.

Cascade Pacific Resource Conservation and Development, Inc.: Grant \$45,000; Match \$5,000

Project: Fifteen Willamette Valley CREP Plans from Signup to CPO

Location: Tributaries to the North Santiam, South Santiam, and Calapooia Rivers

Cascade Pacific Resource Conservation and Development (CPRCD) will complete 15 Conservation Reserve Enhancement Program (CREP) plans in the Calapooia, North Santiam and South Santiam Watersheds. The Oregon Governor's Fund grant will fill a technical assistance funding gap safeguarding current and future landowner interest. CREP is a voluntary land retirement program with financial incentives to help producers protect environmentally sensitive resources; however, there is a shortage of funded CREP Planners in the Upper Willamette basin to take the CREP planning process from initial landowner signup to Conservation Plan of Operation (CPO), the contract which spells out the federally funded practices. To address this gap, CPRCD will contract with a federally certified CREP Planner to complete 15 CREP plans. By partnering with three watershed councils, government agencies, and landowners, CPRCD will take the CREP process from signup to CPO, and fifteen agricultural landowners will install conservation practices for 10 to 15 years, excluding livestock from streams, restoring native shrubs and trees to riparian areas for stream bank protection and stream temperature reduction, and enhancing wildlife habitat critical to the recovery of two endangered anadromous fish species in the rivers and streams of the Upper Willamette Watershed.

Mid Willamette Watershed Alliance: Grant \$20,000; Match \$170,203

Project: Luckiamute Watershed Fish Passage Restoration (OR) - II

Location: Upper Luckiamute River, Polk County

Mid-Willamette Watershed Alliance will replace two culverts on Harris Creek and remove two sets of abandoned railroad bridge pilings on the upper Luckiamute River to reduce erosion and open unrestricted passage to approximately 13.2 miles of spawning and rearing habitat for steelhead, and cutthroat trout. Partners include the Oregon Watershed Enhancement Board, three private landowners, Forest Capital Partners, the Luckiamute Watershed Council, and the Oregon Department of Fish and Wildlife.

Mary's River Watershed Council: Grant \$33,000; Match \$40,000

Project: Model Watershed Landowner Outreach and Project Design

Location: Benton County

Mary's River Watershed Council will conduct Rapid Bio-Assessments as an outreach tool for landowner recruitment, identify restoration sites, and develop three multi-landowner restoration project designs on the Tum Tum River, Greasy Creek, and Beaver Creek sub-basins of the Mary's River Watershed. These three sub-basins, plus Woods Creek, are our focal basins for the Willamette Model Watershed Program. The Rapid Bio-Assessments will provide a baseline of cutthroat trout and rainbow-steelhead distribution and relative abundance, and provide an initial assessment of ecological limiting factors. The Rapid Bio-Assessment results will be presented at a series of community meetings in each sub-basin, including a suite of options for multi-landowner habitat enhancement and restoration. Two completed Rapid Bio-Assessment Reports will be prepared to identify limiting factors for trout and describe high potential restoration sites, and three multi-landowner restoration project designs will be developed. A similar project in Woods Creek has led to participation by 26 landowners in a range of projects including log placements, alcove restoration and creation, riparian planting, and knotweed control.

Benton Soil and Water Conservation District: Grant \$41,388; Match \$12,470

Project: Oak Creek Landowner Recruitment for Riparian Restoration

Location: Benton County

Benton Soil and Water Conservation District will conduct watershed-wide outreach to approximately 57 landowners in the Oak Creek watershed for riparian restoration and begin restoration project planning, including identifying potential funding and preparing preliminary project designs. Resulting projects will address 303(d) listed water quality parameters including temperature, mercury, and bacteria. Landowners will be recruited through mailings, phone calls, neighborhood meetings, workshops, and tours of successful riparian restoration in the watershed. Project partners include Oregon Department of Fish and Wildlife, City of Corvallis, Benton Soil and Water Conservation District, Mary's River Watershed Council, and Oregon State University Extension.

Grant Soil and Water Conservation District: Grant \$48,150; Match \$776,797**Project: Murray and Kennedy Ditch Gravel Push-up Dam Elimination (OR)****Location: John Day River below Dayville, Grant County**

Grant Soil and Water Conservation District will replace two gravel push-up dams with two pump stations, convert 173 acres to sprinkler irrigation, retire approximately 4 miles of open ditch delivery system, increase streamflows up to 2.9 cubic feet per second in up to 2.5 miles of the John Day River, and file a water rights transfer with the Oregon Water Resources Department to sever the water rights from the push-up dam locations ensuring the benefits are permanent. This reach of the John Day River is used as migration for ESA listed summer steelhead, spring Chinook salmon, pacific lamprey and, possibly, ESA listed bull trout. This effort is a component of Grant SWCD's ongoing Fish Passage Program which specifically addresses gravel push-up dams as well as other irrigation structures. The program has successfully provided year round fish passage at 102 sites throughout the Upper John Day River Basin since 1993. Pre- and post-project monitoring and revegetation at the dam sites will be conducted by the Confederated Tribes of the Warm Springs Reservation. Other partners include the Bureau of Reclamation, Oregon Watershed Enhancement Board, Oregon Department of Agriculture, and the landowner.

Western Rivers Conservancy: Grant \$50,000; Match \$50,000**Project: Lower John Day River - Hay Creek Project (OR)****Location: Lower John Day River Basin, Sherman and Gilliam Counties**

Western Rivers Conservancy is undertaking an ecosystem-level land protection effort in the lower John Day River Basin. In October 2008, WRC purchased Murtha Ranch, including 8,114 acres of fee title land and an additional 8,000-acre BLM grazing lease. WRC is implementing priority restoration activities before placing Murtha Ranch in permanent stewardship with Oregon Parks and Recreation Department (OPRD). This project will conserve 16 river miles and fill a large gap in a 148-mile-long reach of protected fish and wildlife habitat in the lower John Day Wild and Scenic River Corridor. Activities include completing fencing along the Hay Creek riparian area; removing noxious weeds; planting native trees and shrubs; restoring native grasslands; installing water catchment(s); and increasing channel complexity and improving in-stream habitat on lower Hay Creek. Partners include Oregon Department of Fish and Wildlife, Oregon Parks and Recreation Department, BLM, and Gilliam and Sherman Counties.

Upper Nehalem Watershed Council: Grant \$50,000; Match \$405,260**Project: Elk Creek Phase II - Fish Passage Restoration****Location: Near Pittsburg, Columbia County**

Upper Nehalem Watershed Council will restore coho, cutthroat and lamprey passage to 3.6 miles of refugia habitat on Elk Creek, a tributary to the East Fork Nehalem River. This project is part of watershed-wide restoration efforts for the East Fork Nehalem by the UNWC and its partners (Weyerhaeuser Corp., Columbia County, Oregon Department of Fish and Wildlife, BLM, and USFWS). The project will replace the existing concrete box culvert with an open-bottom culvert that includes a low flow channel to restore natural stream and substrate conditions and reduce high flow velocities.

North Coast Land Conservancy, Inc.: Grant \$15,000; Match \$5,000

Project: Thompson Creek Floodplain Restoration (OR)

Location: Seaside, Clatsop County

North Coast Land Conservancy will restore the historic wetland floodplain and reconnect winter surface flows from Thompson Creek to the Stanley Lake tidal marsh. By restoring floodplain connection to Thompson Creek, the project will expand native wetland habitat, reduce the presence of non-native plant populations, increase large woody debris, and restore critical hydrological functions that will allow the site to continue to recover and maintain natural functions. The project will contribute to the North Coast Land Conservancy's overall efforts to increase floodplain connectivity and channel complexity at a landscape scale within the Necanicum Estuary while enhancing Coho salmon and American beaver habitat. Project partners include the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service Habitat Restoration Program, Portland State University River Restoration Program, Oregon Department of State Lands, Oregon Department of Fish and Wildlife, Trout Unlimited Tualatin Chapter, and the Necanicum Watershed Council.

Oregon State Police: Grant \$38,236; Match \$0

Project: Oregon State Police Fish and Wildlife Division

Location: Statewide

Oregon State Police Fish and Wildlife Division will increase their ability to investigate environmental and wildlife protection crimes by providing the necessary water testing equipment to its officers. Environmental crime investigations, streambed protection, littering/dumping enforcement, and water pollution investigations are important parts of the Fish and Wildlife Division's effort to improve and protect the state's wildlife and natural resources. Equipment is needed to test turbidity, dissolved oxygen, conductivity, pH, and temperature of a waterway while in the field in order to improve the quality and quantity of evidence and increase the likelihood of a successful prosecution. Grant funds will purchase additional equipment needed to increase the number of water pollution investigations by State Troopers and successful prosecution of polluters, which will increase habitat protection for fish and wildlife and provide a deterrent to others who may consider violating Oregon's environmental laws.

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